



# ***Understanding Conflict***

## **Federal Emerging Leader Development Course**

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Consulting Group LLC



# *Conflict:*

A state of unresolved differences within  
ourselves, or between two or more individuals  
or between groups



- 
- How do you define conflict?
  - When do you think your method of dealing with conflict is useful? Not useful?
  - What behaviors are indicative of your method of dealing with conflict?



# *Avoid / Deny / Withdraw*

## **Use If:**

- Issue or timing is not critical
- Cooling-off period required
- Threat of violence exists
- More information is required

## **Avoid If:**

- ⊗ Immediate resolution is needed
- ⊗ One party remains frustrated by avoidance

## **What To Look For:**

- Non-disclosure of needs, perceptions, or feelings to the other
- Changing the subject, changing the tone of the interaction, or re-labeling
- Focusing on something else



# Accommodation

## Use If:

- You are wrong
- To allow a better position to be heard
- Preservation of the relationship is more important than the issue
- Continued competition would damage your case

## Avoid If:

- ⊗ The issue is significant and must be resolved sooner than later

## What To Look For:

- Non-disclosure of needs, perceptions, or feelings to the other
- “Easy agreement”, “Going along with”
- Use of many qualifiers



# Competition

## **Use If:**

- Swift Action is Needed
- Important, but unpopular issues
- Vital to Organization when you know you are right
- Protection against people who take advantage of non-competitive behavior

## **Avoid If:**

- ⊗ Concern of parties is not clear
- ⊗ Consequences have not been considered

## **What To Look For:**

- *Accusing, labeling, blaming*
- *Use of sarcasm*
- *Use of “You” language*
- *Invasion of “space”*



# Compromise

## Use If:

- Goals are of moderate importance
- Both parties feel a compromise would help
- Equal power groups committed to mutually exclusive goals
- Temporary solution required as a step toward resolution of a complex issue

## Avoid If:

- ⊗ Only one party is willing to give
- ⊗ Negotiation is not possible

## What To Look For:

- *Disclosure of surface needs only*
- *Concealing own underlying needs*
- *Acknowledgement of others' surface needs, perceptions, feelings*
- *Use of "Negotiation talk"*



# Collaboration

## **Use If:**

- Shared values or goals
- Available time
- Power balanced
- Effective Communication
- Concerns too important to compromise
- Requires merging of insights from different perspectives

## **Avoid If:**

- ⊗ No balance of power
- ⊗ Goals or values not shared

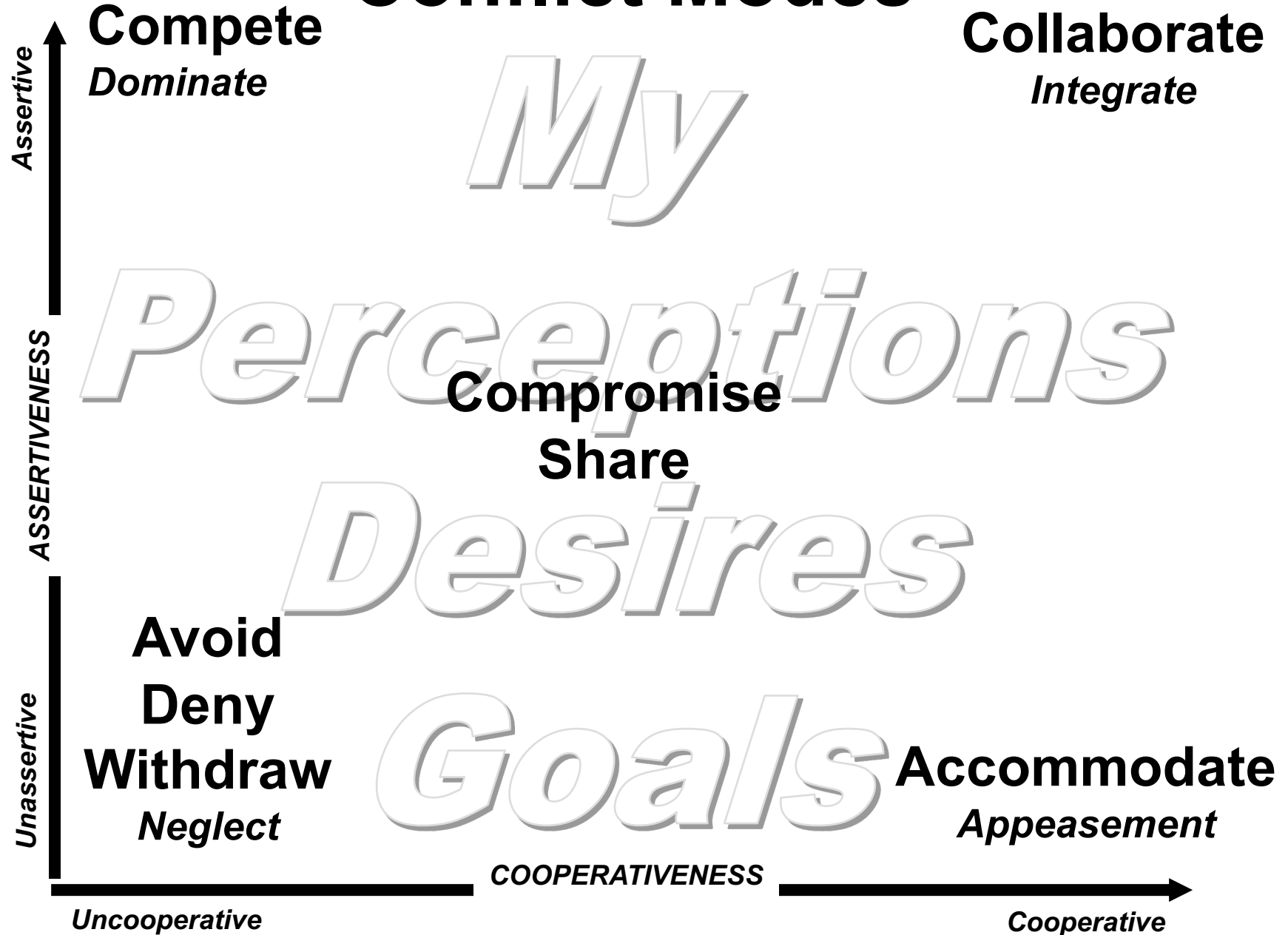
## **What To Look For:**

- *Disclosure of relevant thoughts, feelings interests*
- *Separating people from the problem*
- *Identifying underlying interest instead of taking a “position”*
- *Use of “I” statements, active listening; generating opinions*





# Conflict Modes



# Types of Conflict

- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
- Intergroup



# Functions of Conflict

- Establishes Identity
- Safety Valve
- Increases Cohesion
- Test of Strength
- Spurs Needed Change
- Mobilizes Energy
- Performance Improvement
- Enhances Communication
- Ends Non-Productive Relationships



# Causes of Conflict

- Miscommunication
- Conflicting Expectations
  - *Task requirements, coordination*
  - *Workload distribution*
  - *Allocation of resources*
  - *Differing priorities*
- Values or Beliefs Challenged



# SO WHAT?



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# NOW WHAT?



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